

III Kings IX – The State of the Kingdoms

"At that time the Kingdom of Heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ... Again, it will be like a man going on a journey..."¹ But what will the Kingdom of God be like? There is no mention of the condition of the Kingdom of God by Jesus at all.

When He warned the disciples of the signs of the end of the age in Matthew, Mark and Luke, He clearly told them what the world would be experiencing. "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from Heaven"² ...giving rise to "...days of distress unequalled from the beginning, when God created the world, until now—and never to be equaled again."³

In the two parables of Matthew 25.1-13 and 25.14-30, the figures of speech used by the Lord to represent the people of the Kingdom of Heaven are virgins and servants. What do these figures of speech really mean from a Kingdom of God perspective? Remember that those who are of the Kingdom of God have to be born again of the Spirit and those who are of the Kingdom of Heaven are those who repent and believe at the preaching of John the Baptist as Jesus said, "For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him,"⁴ but are not born again of the Spirit.⁵

To the religious, the word 'virgin' means holy... but for those who can see from the perspective of the Kingdom of God, 'virgin' refers to a person who has done nothing yet... that is exactly what the Kingdom of Heaven is... a kingdom where righteousness is purely by faith and not by works. All who are in the Kingdom of Heaven are pure like virgins by their faith, but like a virgin, they have done nothing yet in that kingdom or for that kingdom, for theirs is truly not a kingdom of this Earth but of another place. It is not the kingdom that will come on Earth, but rather, a kingdom that those on Earth will go to through death as they depart the realm of the flesh to enter the realm of the spirit.

More importantly, they are ones who know nothing of what they have been told. They are yet to experience the life of the Kingdom of Heaven, for that life is not possible on Earth. And the other figure of speech used about the people of the Kingdom of Heaven is 'servants', both hardworking and lazy, but nevertheless, only servants who do not know their Master's business as a friend would... but rather, are set certain tasks that they must do or that they will fail to do and so will be rewarded (paid) like servants according to what they have done.

Such are the states of the people of the Kingdom of Heaven – 'virgins' and 'servants' – much like the soldiers of Israel who fled from the Philistines. 'Virgins' and 'servants' who have not done anything and who do not know their Master's business, but rather, are in a self-preservatory mode, ensuring that they get their reward. The virgins do not share their oil and the servants do not pool their returns. The man who was entrusted with the five talents and gained five talents, did not give one talent to the servant who did not gain anything.

It is a kingdom where your faith and your repentance saves you and you only, but without power you can do nothing for another.

Likewise, in the Parable of the Ten Minas,⁶ which was told because [the people thought that the Kingdom of God was going to appear at once](#), Jesus told them a parable without saying, "The Kingdom of God is like..." The figure of speech is also 'servants' and again here... the one who gained ten minas did not share it with the one who gained nothing. However, the Kingdom of God does not consist only of servants... but rather, has friends and sons who are also the servants.

There are no parables given to tell us what the Kingdom of God will be like at the end because it is the kingdom that is defined by the end of days. Certainly, it is not a kingdom of virgins, but rather, a kingdom of experienced people. The difference between the Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God at the end of days is like the difference between Eleazar and the rest of the Israelite army. Eleazar was the only one who was bloodied that day and as such, was the only 'non-virgin' of the army, whilst the army that fled had not yet been bloodied and were truly what one can call 'virgin' soldiers. Eleazar alone

¹ Matthew 25.1, 14

² Luke 21.10-11

³ Mark 13.19

⁴ Matthew 21.32

⁵ John 3.3, 5

⁶ Luke 19.11-27

fought at Pas Dammin and he alone wielded the power of his sword and experienced the power of God in battle. As for the rest of the army, they only returned to strip the dead.

So likewise, the people of the Kingdom of Heaven are those who have not and will not experience the fight to overcome the distress of these days, but like the Israelite army, will only reap the reward of the victory... but will not have experienced the battle itself to achieve the victory, for to them is not given the kingdom of power. The servants within the Kingdom of Heaven, even if they are diligent, can only achieve a return according to the measure they are given. The man with five talents achieved the five talents; the man with the two talents achieved the two talents. But in the Kingdom of God, the servants can achieve beyond the measure they are given... each had one mina, but one could achieve a ten minas return.

So what do we know of the Kingdom of God? What is the Kingdom of God like at the end of the age? Firstly, it will not be a kingdom that is "...like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom," not a picture of blissful ignorance with people who have done nothing... but rather, it is like Eleazar and Shammah who were certainly not virgin soldiers, but had fought the battle, had bloodied themselves in battle, and had slain their share of the enemies.

For the Kingdom of God at the end of the age will be like solitary soldiers who have stood their ground against impossible odds and won the day with power and ability that is superhuman... a power that comes from God and not from them, but given them because they took the stand to defend their patch of ground.

It will be a kingdom like a man who has servants who would do more than what they are told to do and given to do... a kingdom where truly even some of the servants would be doing the greater things.

As such, as the separation begins today and until the King arrives, so those who are of the Kingdom of Heaven will be like 'virgins' who have done nothing yet, except to go and meet their King. Now see the word: "...ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom." So those who are of the Kingdom of Heaven will go to meet the Lord and enter the Kingdom of Heaven... as a virgin meets with the bridegroom. People who themselves have not yet done anything which they are prepared for – virgins. They will not have experienced on Earth or done anything on Earth that which they will experience in Heaven or do in Heaven, just like a virgin.

However, the Kingdom of God will consists of people who are not virgins, who do not go to meet the Bridegroom, but at worst, are servants who have stayed behind waiting for the Master to come to them... stayed behind so that when He arrives and knocks on the door, they are there to open the door. They are men and women who have already been doing and experiencing what they will do and experience in the Kingdom of God, even before the Kingdom of God comes. For though the Kingdom of God is within us and among us... it does not come until the Son of Man is revealed.⁷ As the Lord said concerning the signs of the end of the age, "Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the Kingdom of God is near."⁸

So what is the Kingdom of God like at the end of the age? It is like a people who are waiting for their King to return so that they can truly be a kingdom. Even though they know they are as good as a kingdom, they are not yet a kingdom because the Man who "...went to a distant country to have Himself appointed King..."⁹ has not yet returned. However, while they are waiting... His servants and not just His servants, but His family and everyone who wants Him to be King over them, will have already been defending the household, the property and the birthright of the Man so that when He returns, He will find His servants, His family and His people ready and waiting.

So what is the Kingdom of God like at the end of the age? It is like a household waiting for their Master to return and become the King of the land. A household whose servants are not like virgins, but are like soldiers bloodied in battle. Men and women who have already been able to do what they will do when their kingdom comes. Men and women who are already experienced in the ways of the coming kingdom, like veteran soldiers are with battle and not like virgins who have yet to experience the wedding night. Men and women who can do more than they have received and have been given... from a mina they will acquire ten, just like their King who from a few loaves and a few small fish, fed thousands upon thousands. Men and women who not only are able to keep themselves alive until their King arrives... but are also able to keep others alive.

⁷ Luke 17.21, 30

⁸ Luke 21.31

⁹ Luke 19.12

Now here is a key difference between those who are servants of the Kingdom of Heaven and those who are of the Kingdom of God: The servant of the Kingdom of Heaven is thrown out as the Lord said, "And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth,"¹⁰ but the wicked servant of Luke 19.22, only his mina was taken away... " 'Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas' "¹¹ ...but he was not thrown out, for after all, he was only wicked.

So be of good courage if you have been baptised by Jesus after you have repented and believed the message of John the Baptist... for those who are born again of the Spirit and have entered the Kingdom of God are not thrown out... unless you are the one who speaks against the Holy Spirit. Such is the grace of God to all He gives the new birth to by His Spirit.

Now knowing this difference, then stand your ground if you are born again, like Eleazar and Shammah, and do not shy away from the coming flood of distress like a virgin... but stand and overcome so that by the power of God that dwells in you, through miracles, signs and wonders, you will emerge from the deluge and be found standing to greet the King... as the Lord said, "...stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."¹²

Redemption? I thought we are already redeemed? Yes, we are saved... but for the things that we will need to do through the days of distress, it will truly seem to all who are involved that we are indeed in need of redemption, all over again.

For it was not a virgin who first beheld the risen Lord, but a woman out of whom seven demons had been driven out... a woman who knew well the ways of the world. Likewise, there are no 'virgins' in the Kingdom of God, for all who remain will have done and experienced a foretaste of what the King is bringing back with Him – the power, the peace, the joy and the righteousness – because they have taken their stand to overcome what is in front of them. As the Philistines were to Eleazar and Shammah, so the days of distress unequalled since the creation of the world are to us.

Now, as surely as the man to whom was given the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven is waiting for all who are going to the Kingdom of Heaven to greet the Bridegroom... so the keys of the Kingdom of God are being given to the servants... the brothers and sisters of that Man of noble birth who is returning from the distant country to which He had gone to be appointed King... so that when He knocks, the servants will be able to open the door for Him to step through, and the world will behold Him who is the Son of Man.

This time, the keys will not be given to a man who can only offer phileo love when agape is asked, who can offer no repentance when disobedience has been exposed, nor to a man who lays down his life lightly. No... this time... the keys of the kingdom will be given to those who know they have received the keys.

"When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."¹³

Amen.

¹⁰ Matthew 25.30

¹¹ Luke 19.24

¹² Luke 21.28

¹³ Luke 21.28